

NARRATIVE
OF
MONS. DE CHAUMEREIX,
A NAVAL OFFICER,
WHO
ESCAPED FROM THE MASSACRES
OF
AURAI & VANNES,
AFTER THE EXPEDITION OF QUIBERON.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,
BY THE REV. CHARLES LEFEBVRE,
TEACHER OF THE FRENCH LANGUAGE,
WITTON - LE - WEAR.

Sunderland:

1800.



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NARRATIVE, &c.

DESIGN OF THE WORK.

IF the recital of dangers from which I have had the happiness to escape, were not connected with one of the great disasters of the French Revolution, I should not have obtruded on the public attention. In retracing them at this time, I am far from wishing to excite a sympathy for my own misfortunes, which belongs more justly to those of others. More noble motives inspire me; I am animated by more liberal sentiments.

Monstrous crimes have followed an easy victory. Should my country be accused, or its tyrants? The public opinion, as yet wavering, is about to be established.

France, for three years, has presented only tyrants and slaves, executioners and victims.—Free and generous minds turn with disgust from this picture; feeling hearts tremble to behold it. I will direct them to more agreeable objects. They shall behold the most tender humanity shine amidst the noble virtues and real courage whereby it is surrounded.

The massacres of Vannes were effected by the command of the party which at that time prevailed in the Convention;—that party which caused disaffection in the army; those men who have every where excited indignation. But the French name must not be stained with this crime. It ought to be added to that immense list by which the Convention has rivetted its bloody tyranny.

A Capitulation was made, and it was broken! Cruelty invoked perfidy to her aid.—Escaped almost alone from these massacres, I felt it an indispensable duty to discover the authors.—Ah! who could separate himself from the glory of his country? But sentiments still more tender animate me. I was impatient to pay the tribute of love and gratitude to those generous benefactors who have braved so many dangers to snatch me from death. Oh! my friends,
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this tribute will reach you from a foreign land, it is true; but in which they know how to honor virtue and respect misfortune. I should rejoice to present your names to all minds of sensibility, but am forced to conceal them;—there are still tyrants in my country.

And you, affecting victims of honor and fidelity! I have seen your sublime sacrifice, and will retrace it. You are no more, but your generous blood has flowed for your king; it has flowed in those noble countries where his revered name is so often invoked! From thence your avengers will one day arise. You deserved to conquer in the plains of la Vendee.—Be comforted, illustrious shades! You shall be associated in glory with those heroes.

CHAPTER I.

ON the twenty-first of July, at five in the morning, the corps which were not on duty at Fort Penthievre were still at their quarters. We heard the generale beat.—The regiment of Hector formed, and Monf. de Soulange, although grievously wounded in the affair of the sixteenth, put himself at our head. We marched towards the little mill, where Monf. de Sombreuil was under arms with his division. We were as yet ignorant of the capture of Fort Penthievre; we supposed it only attacked. Monf. de Sombreuil had just ordered some movements, when we perceived the enemy marching in three columns; one taking to the right, another to the left on the sea-shore to surround us. That of the centre composed of grenadiers and chasseurs, advanced against our front, preceded by some riflemen, who annoyed us very much. When they were within musket-shot, a great number of our soldiers deserted to the enemy, and cried out, "*we are Republicans.*" I did not remark one of the division of Monf. de Sombreuil, nor
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of the regiment of Hector.—Monf. de Sombreuil commanded us to march to Fort-Neuf, and to rally there. In going thither some foldiers abandoned us again, to re-embark. We beheld on the fhore a multitude of old men, women and children, who came to feek an afylum at Quiberon, and who in throwing themfelves into the boats, perifhed in our fight.—Tormenting fpectacle! Paying little regard to our perfonal misfortunes, we gave the tribute of our tears to the fate of fo many victims.

Arrived at Fort-Neuf, Monf. de Sombreuil collected the remains of the different corps.—The Englifh floop Lark, anchored very near the land, and cannonaded the centre column. The two others always manœuvred with a view to furround us.

It was in this pofition that Monf. de Sombreuil advanced alone towards the enemy, and made a fign with his hand. The column halted. General Hoche, who commanded it, advanced a few fteps, followed by two of his ftaff-officers. Monf. de Sombreuil, raifing his voice, faid to him, “The men I command, are determined
“to perifh under the ruins of the fort; but if
“you will permit them to re-embark, you will
“fpare the blood of Frenchmen.” General
Hoche

Hoche answered him,—“ I cannot suffer them
 “ to re-embark, but if you will ground your
 “ arms, you shall be treated as prisoners of
 “ war.” “ Are the Emigrants included in this
 “ capitulation?” added Mons. de Sombreuil.
 “ Yes,” said General Hoche,—“ *all who lay*
 “ *down their arms.*”

The terms of the capitulation being agreed upon, Gen. Hoche asked M. de Sombreuil his name. When he heard it, “ as to you, sir, I
 “ can promise nothing.” “ It is not for my-
 “ self,” answered Mons. de Sombreuil, “ that I
 “ was desirous to capitulate. I shall die content
 “ if I can save my brave companions in arms.
 “ Believe me, I am far from wishing to survive
 “ so unfortunate a day.”

Mons. de Sombreuil returned to the fort and said to us, “ Gentlemen, I have obtained as fa-
 “ vorable conditions as circumstances would
 “ permit. I have engaged that you should
 “ lay down your arms; ground them, and
 “ tell the English sloop to cease firing.” He
 concealed from us that he had sacrificed him-
 self. Some people who spoke English, advanced towards the shore, and told the sloops not to approach, for they had capitulated. The Lark continued her fire. Mons. de Gery, a
 naval

naval officer, threw himself into the water; swam towards the sloop, and told her to cease firing. Faithful to the terms of capitulation, he returned amongst us, to find a death from which he might so easily have escaped;—but his memory is immortalized by this heroic action.

In a few moments three republican officers and many foldiers came into the fort. *Monf. D'Entrechaux*, my comrade and friend, had not left me in this ill-fated day: I proposed to him that we should approach one of those officers, whose deportment inspired me with confidence. “You see (said I,) how unhappy we are, but save us, sir, from insults, which would be more tormenting than death itself.” This officer replied (resting on the neck of his horse) “ah! how much am I affected with your misfortunes! I have served the same cause as you: It is perhaps as dear to me. I could not find for myself and family, any asylum against tyranny, but in the republican armies. But I conjure you to re-embark if possible.” We told him that the sloops had weighed anchor, and that there was a capitulation. He then desired us to follow him. We were going out of the fort as *Tallien* was enter-

entering it. He was on horseback. His soft and agreeable countenance had nothing insulting in it.—“ Here (said I) is a day very much “ unforeseen.” “ Yes sir,” (said he, modestly) and approaching M. de Sombreuil, “ ah ! how “ unfortunate is your family !” “ I did hope “ to revenge them, (said Mons. de Sombreuil) “ but I shall learn at least to support misfor- “ tunes.” Tallien immediately gave orders to conduct the prisoners to St. Barbe, which was the head-quarters of the army. The republican officer led us through a bye road.

We passed through the army, without receiving, I will not say an injury, but without an unpleasant word. We perceived every where a sympathy blended with pity. Arrived at a post, our new friend called the officer, and said to him, “ take care of these gentlemen, “ they have exerted their efforts to spare republican blood !” He folded us in his arms and left us. He had without doubt a particular destination, for we never saw him more.—May this tender and generous man some day run over these sheets, and there read the deep impression which he has left in our hearts ! The officer to whom he recommended us, caused us to enter into his tent, and offered us

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some very black bread. He apologized both for the quality and quantity of it. "Our portion is small (said he) but I am happy to divide it with you." He added in a low voice, "A republic is a fine thing, but we die with hunger, and we are naked!" And in reality, this army was in want of every thing. "But (I added) we are still more to be pitied than you." "Undeceive yourself (said he) you have here two very powerful claims; you are unfortunate and you are royalists. You will see with what eagerness they will fly to your aid. You are in a friendly and hospitable country. You do not know how much you are wished for. I have just gone through it. Sorrow marked our way. Mothers, shewing us to their children, said to them, behold the supporters of the horrible Convention! It is certain (added he) that you have let slip a most favorable opportunity. If you had had but the smallest success, the colours of the republic would have been abandoned. Tallien knew it well, and he exerted every effort to determine the troops to attack the fort."

We wished to prolong our conversation with this plain and honest man, when some republic-

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lican officers came into the tent ; some led by curiosity, but more by a real sympathy. Every one had a decent and engaging manner. Many of them had been imprisoned during the tyranny of Robespierre. They had known misfortune, and had learnt to honor it from experience. They used every endeavour to quiet our apprehensions. They told us that the army had heard with joy of our capitulation, and that no one would dare to violate it. These discourses sometimes inspired us with hope, and the regard shewn us by the soldiers served to confirm it. They spoke to us with kindness. If they met with an officer of the same province or of the same town, they approached him with ardour, and every trace of those prejudices and aversions productive of so many crimes and miseries, was obliterated.

At four o'clock in the evening they beat the *generale* : Orders were given to assemble the prisoners, and prepare to march to Aurai.



CHAPTER. II.

Our arrival at Aurai and transactions there.

THE republican officer conducted us to the place of rendezvous, and recommended us to one of his friends. He promised to inform us of all that might pass; but, added he, do not be uneasy, the opinion is too firmly fixed. All the army were of the same mind; they did not suspect the perfidy of Tallien.

At five o'clock, they placed us between two ranks of soldiers, and set off for Aurai. Before our departure, the republican officer who commanded the escort, told M. de Sombreuil that we should be treated with the regard due to prisoners of war, but that he hoped no person would endeavour to escape. The escort was weak, and worn down with fatigue. The bad roads obliged us every moment to break the ranks and go through the fields. It was very dark. I being obliged to stop, the column went on. I lost my way; I called with a loud voice; they answered me, and I came up with two soldiers who conducted me to the detachment. At our arrival at Aurai, not one person

was missing. None of the prisoners wished to shrink from the dangers that might await us; but estimating life as nothing, and honor above every thing, they displayed an example of religious and heroic fidelity to their parole.

Before we arrived at Aurai, the commander of the escort told me that we were going to be lodged in a church, and desired me to go in among the first, that I might secure a seat on a stone-bench adjoining a pillar. We arrived at Aurai about half past nine o'clock at night. All the women were at the windows. I regarded them attentively. I perceived emotions of the most tender sympathy. Tears streamed from every eye. They regarded us always with sorrow, and sometimes with timidity: They seemed to fear meeting with a son, a brother, or a friend.—The prisoners marched in silence; night added to this spectacle, a solemnity inexpressibly interesting.

We were conducted to the church appointed. I seated myself on the stone-bench. I perceived at that moment Mons. de Sombreuil standing, and looking about for a place to sit down. I offered him a share of mine; he accepted it, and this gave rise to our acquaintance. He spoke without ceasing of the misfortunes of
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this day. He unboomed himself freely, but made no allusion to the fate which awaited him. A stranger to fear, his young and ardent spirit panted only after glory. Foiled in the commencement of a brilliant career, he felt beyond every thing a profound grief in not being able to fulfil his destination. This sentiment was often mingled with tender and affecting recollections. He had just torn himself from love, without bearing the endearing name of husband. Worn out with fatigue, we fell asleep. I awoke the first; when my attention was fixed on him. What serenity! I paid the tribute of an involuntary tear to so much beauty, such youth, and such expectations *

At eight o'clock in the morning, the municipal officers came into the church to demand the list of the officers, and to separate them from the soldiers. They excepted the volunteer nobles of Beon and Damas. We were found 575. We were sent to a house of safety and placed in seven apartments.

At four o'clock in the evening, a detachment came and conducted us on the road to l'Orient, where

* I here certify that the letter from Mons. de Sombreuil, to Commodore Warren, is genuine. M. de S. read it to me.— He had it in contemplation to write one to the King of England.

where three thousand men were under arms. In going through the city, we perceived marks of the greatest grief. The inhabitants were convinced that we were going to the scaffold. Many of us thought the same. We were moved by this spectacle. I have often remarked that a mind capable of bearing up against injuries, is easily melted with marks of pity.—The soldiers endeavoured to soften every thing which in this military march had the appearance of harshness.

At eight o'clock, we entered into the town with music playing; which was drowned by the shouts of joy of the Inhabitants. They brought wine and fruits, which were faithfully delivered to us by the soldiers.

The twenty third at eight o'clock in the morning many women came into our prison; they were put in requisition for the service of the house; but this requisition was only an unmeaning word, for it required some interest to be elected. It was an affecting spectacle to see young and handsome women, lavishing the most tender cares upon us, and condescending to the meanest offices with a charming grace. The women even among the mob distinguished themselves by their officious ardour and goodness.

goodness. A common sentiment of benevolence and humanity seemed to prevail.

I perceived in a remote part, a young person who was particularly attentive. Her figure was mild and delicate, her countenance bashful. I know not what secret emotion impelled me to approach her, for I was very far from surmising all the services which she was to render me.—“You seem to take (said I to her) a most lively interest in our misfortunes.” She answered, “can they be seen without being felt?” And in uttering these words in the most expressive tone of voice, a tear stole down her cheek. She added, “I have a brother an emigrant, whom I dearly love; I am ignorant of his fate.”—I assured her that I knew him well. She left me after this discourse. I perceived that she had taken particular notice of my dress. She returned some minutes after with a complete suit. My aunt (said she) takes upon herself “to comfort you and your friends; for my part I shall come to see you every day; believe me that your situation shall never be absent from my mind.” I tenderly pressed her hands. I was affected. I greatly admired those tender and happy emotions of nature, which the sight of misfortune awakens with
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so much force in susceptible minds. I saw that, if the high conceptions of genius have occasion for solitude, the great and noble affections of the heart develope themselves in misfortune. I doubted no more the existence of events, unforeseen, it is true, in the ordinary course of life, but rapidly brought to light by circumstances. I had known Sophia only one hour; already she became my friend. She had already done for me every thing, which a courageous and active friendship could inspire. From this moment she watched over my situation incessantly. The least danger alarmed her, but her tender anxieties were immediately blended with the most cordial consolations. I enjoyed by her means that pure pleasure, which heaven seems to have placed in the heart of a modest and sensible woman.

The following days, our prison was filled with the inhabitants who brought us provisions of all sorts. The soldiers sometimes said to them, "you have nothing for us, but now when your dear royalists are here, you find every thing." "Well," they answered, "must we not succour the unfortunate?"

The twenty seventh, I read the accounts given by General Hoche to the Convention.

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The last sentence was: *The emigrants placed between fire and water, had no alternative but to surrender.* He did not mention the capitulation. This perfidy inspired me with the most lively fears. I begged Sophia to come to the door-grate, for since the 26th women were not permitted to enter. She came immediately. I conjured her instantly to get intelligence of our fate, and to acquaint me with it without disguise. "If it be unfavorable, said she, I can never tell you of it." I assured her that death did not alarm me, but that even to escape it, it was necessary that I should be informed in good time. We then agreed that if she could not write to me, she should appear with a black veil on her head,

CHAPTER. III.

Execution of the Bishop of Dol, and of Mons. de Sombreuil.

THE 28th, at two in the afternoon, a subaltern of the *Gendarmerie*, came for Monsieur de Sombreuil, Joseph de Broglie, de la Londe, chief of the Chouans, the Bishop of Dol, and fourteen priests, to conduct them to

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Vannes,

Vannes. This circumstance alarmed us. But the republican officers dissipated our fears.— There was even a report that M. de Sombretuil was ordered to Paris. Some minutes after, Sophia came to see me, and informed me that the eighteen prisoners were taken to Vannes, chained on a cart.

The 29th, some officers of our acquaintance forewarned us that a commission had just been named, which was well selected, and recommended us to inform all those who should be called, to insist on the capitulation.

At eight o'clock, they came for Mons. de Soulangue, and fifteen persons, to appear before the commission; which, after the examination was closed, declared to the representatives of the people, that they could not condemn prisoners, who, by the confession of the soldiers themselves, had made a capitulation.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, the republican officers came and told us, that they were stung with grief and indignation; that they would rather die than be members of such a commission. The general officers seeing this disposition of the army, chose the members from among the Belgians and other foreigners.

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The 30th, at seven o'clock, General le Moine, a man of coarse manners and ferocious behaviour, arrived at Vannes. He broke the commission of Aurai, and nominated four others. All the officers having refused, he ordered the men to take arms, and threatened to fire on the first who should refuse to accept his place in a commission. He chose two from among the Belgians and one from among the French.—Each was composed of a lieutenant-colonel, a captain, a serjeant, a corporal and a private. Of these three commissions, the first was destined for Aurai, the second for Quiberon, and the third for Vannes, where one was already established. They were just returned from condemning *Monf. de Sombreuil*.

At seven o'clock, I received a billet from Sophia, containing only these words, "My heart is on the rack, save yourself."—From another hand, I received some details of the interrogatories and execution of the prisoners at Vannes; being interesting and pathetic, I shall transcribe them.

The twenty-ninth, *Monf. de Sombreuil* appeared before the commission. After having declared his name, his age, and the period of his emigration, he added, "I have lived and
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" will die a royalist. On the point of appearing before God, I swear there was a capitulation made, and that they pledged themselves to treat the emigrants as prisoners of war." Then turning to the soldiers that surrounded him,— " I appeal to your testimony, grenadiers ; (said he) it was before you I capitulated." " Yes, (said they) we attest it." The Bishop of Dol and the other prisoners were examined the same day. After their condemnation they passed the night in the tower.

The following day at ten o'clock, a detachment of the battalion of Paris came to conduct them to the place of execution. They tied the hands of the condemned persons behind their backs. M. de S. exclaimed against this humiliation. " Your king also has been tied," they said ; he then submitted. They were drawn up on the public walk of Vannes, called *la garenne*. M. de Sombreuil marched at their head. His noble and fierce countenance formed a contrast with the calm and mild resignation of the Bishop of Dol. There was the victim of honor, here the martyr of faith. In one was seen contempt of life, in the other the desire of death. The inhabitants

tants of Vannes, bathed in tears, surrounded them. A tender and affecting sympathy seemed to diffuse itself over the countenance of the young warrior; something religious and sacred in that of the venerable prelate.

Arrived at the place of execution, they were drawn up in a line. Mons. de Sombreuil refused to kneel down. The Bishop of Dol begged they would uncover his head. At the sight of his serene countenance, in which shined forth a new life, the people were seized with a sacred reverence; a silent grief pervaded all.—M. de Sombreuil was presented with a bandage:—"No, (said he) I like to see my "enemy." When the soldiers took aim at him, he told them, "aim more to the right, you "will miss me."—These words were pronounced, and he was no more!

The fate of Mons. de Sombreuil, and of the rest who were condemned, left us no hope. The following day (the 31st) a detachment of the seventy-second regiment came to conduct a hundred and fifty prisoners to Vannes.—I was of the number, with my comrades of the regiment of Hector.

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CHAPTER IV.

Our arrival at Vannes.

WE fet out on foot at ten in the morning. It is five leagues from Aurai to Vannes; we performed it in four hours. Madame de Bokozel followed her husband, and did not quit him for a moment until his death. We all admired the courage of this extraordinary woman. Her cares and consolations were not confined to her husband; her unwearyed sensibility extended to every one of us.

On our arrival at Vannes, we were conducted to the church of the seminary. It was immediately filled with men and women who shewed the same interest in our behalf as the good inhabitants of Aurai. We had provisions of all kinds in abundance; every one strove to present us with them, and wished for a preference. The rich and poor were mixed together. Oh! what an affecting equality was this! We were moved even to tears. The horror of our situation was dissipated; a soft illusion made us forget our fetters. We regained our country in our prison. We once more found that people, the same they

they were in the days of our glory and prosperity, tender, humane, and generous. Every one exclaimed, "*at least I shall not die in a strange land,*" and derived a new courage from the idea. Once more an exile from my country, these recollections have even now an inexpressible charm.

We were one hundred and fifty in the church; most of us naval officers. I remained there from the 31st of July to the 3d of August: These four days left in my heart an indelible impression. Every thing in that temple conveyed the image of death. All ranks, all ages were confounded together.—Here the child slept by the side of his parent, who regarded him with the most tender concern.—There the father folded a son in his arms. A little further, the husband bathed with his tears the last words that he should write to his wife. Two friends embraced each other, and swore never to part again. If one of us was called to trial, that is to say, to death, all were desirous to follow him, and pronounced with one voice an eternal adieu!—

To these scenes of grief and dismay, sometimes succeeded soft and affecting scenes.—We formed ourselves into different little parties

ties. A captain of a ship was lying on the straw, surrounded by the officers who had fought under his orders. The grave thoughts of old age, the favorite recollections of other times, prevailed alternately in conversations. Frequently these discourses were enlivened by the most striking natural sentiments, and the most heartfelt effusions of friendship. The contemplations of an elderly man, were sometimes interrupted by the cheerfulness of a young one, or the pranks of a child: But amidst this variety of tones, ideas, and affections, the same resignation pervaded all; and in this abode of death, the victims alone were tranquil.—The inhabitants of Vannes were most tenderly affected, but no impression was so exquisite as, when after public prayer (as if by an holy inspiration,) we raised all our voices and hands to call down from heaven a blessing upon France. The soldiers on guard were at first motionless with astonishment and admiration; but religious sentiments instantly revived in their hearts; they came into the midst of us, and interrupted our prayers with their lamentations.

The 31st of July, ten persons were interrogated. The 1st of August sixty, and the 2d
 forty

forty more. A republican officer who was present at their examination, told me that they had astonished the auditors by their firmness, and by the dignity of their answers. Not one of them betrayed the least symptom of weakness. One of my comrades, Mons. de Troujolly said to his judges, "I demand your justice in favor of my servant. When I caused him to leave France, he knew not my designs. He has never carried arms. I alone am responsible for his emigration." Another, M. de Coatudavel, a young man of an agreeable figure, presented himself before the tribunal. When they asked his age, he answered, that he was thirty. One of his judges, excited by an emotion of sensibility, said to him, "sir, it is impossible, you have not the appearance of being twenty." "I will not, replied M. de Coatudavel, redeem my life by a falsehood."

The second of August seventy of the condemned were shot together; on the morrow forty more. We heard the discharge of the musquetry. At this fatal report, we were all seized with an emotion of horror. A priest who was with us recited, with a loud voice, the prayers for the dead.

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In describing these barbarous executions, my heart still shudders. Never perhaps were sacrificed at one time so many interesting victims. In one minute perished all that could inspire respect, admiration and love. Nothing was spared, neither venerable old age, nor eminent services, nor the greatest talents, nor the most exalted virtue, nor the most tender youth. The navy lost an hundred officers,* of which some were her pride, others her hope. Oh my unfortunate comrades! I have survived you; I shall ever mourn for you. I would here consecrate your names, but how can I render them the justice they deserve? Your memory deserves better homage, and I feel the happy presage. A day will come, when returned into our empty arsenals, Frenchmen affrighted at this solitude, will ask us what is become of those officers who carried into the two worlds the glory of their country. We shall tell them: "Those men whom time had spared, and who had braved the steel of the enemy,

* In the great number of officers whom I could here name, Mess. de Soulangue and de Froger deserve particular notice, the one by his long and honorable services, the other by his great knowledge of every part of the sea-service, and chiefly in naval tactics, which raised him to be the worthy successor of Mons. de Pavillon.

"enemy, have perished by the hands of your tyrants. Go to their tombs; there unfurl the standards to which they did honor, and their manes will be comforted."

There remained in the church forty persons who obtained the reprieve, which the representative Blad had granted to servants, and to all those who were not sixteen years old at the time of their emigration, or who had left their country before 1789. The following chapter will shew how I was comprised in that number.

CHAPTER. V.

My Examination.

THE first of august, at noon, a republican officer whom I had known at Aurai, came into the church with one of his comrades. "What, (cried he) are you yet alive?" He added, "Here is my friend, who is not less affected than myself, with your misfortunes. Duty obliges us to leave you.—We shall return to-night. But if they are asking for persons to be examined, do not you come forward."

The two officers returned at four o'clock. He who was introduced to me in the morning examined me attentively. I thought I recollected his features. We had been educated together at the college of——The sweetest remembrance of youth and the most tender sentiments of nature arose at once in his heart; he threw himself into my arms, and cried out—"No my friend, you shall not die." These were the only words he could utter. He bathed me with his tears. His comrade snatching him from my arms, said to him,—
 "You are too much moved. The soldiers
 "on duty will have some suspicion. To-mor-
 "row we will come and breakfast here, and
 "we will concert with more calmness the
 "means to obtain a reprieve: It is a great
 "point to gain time."

The next day at seven in the morning, the two officers came to the church. We placed ourselves in a corner. I wished to express my gratitude to my fellow-student. "What! (said he, with emotion) do you talk to me of gratitude? Speak only of my happiness." Soon after, by a natural impulse, we recalled the days of our youth. These recollections have always many charms. My situation added to them

them a soothing melancholy. On the point of throwing a last look on life, I directed it to that age when pleasures are mere sports, and the passions innocent desires; in which friendship, that tender commerce of two young hearts, has all the purity and novelty of an original sentiment. One hour had already elapsed in these effusions. With what grief did we tear ourselves from them! His comrade was occupied during this time, in admiring the prisoners. He told me that these executions inspired an universal horror: That only the strongest menaces could determine the soldiers to obey the orders.

After this conversation, we concerted the answers which I should make, when I was to appear before the tribunal. It was also agreed, that I should ask to be examined the first, and that I should take the name of——under which I was little known, but which would serve to make me known to my family, if a reprieve should be granted me.

The third of august at seven in the morning, I went out with all those who were ordered for examination. It was held at the hotel de Gouvello.

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Here follows the account of my examination. I was opposite the president; the gallery was behind; near a hundred persons were present.

Q. Your name, citizen?

A. ———

Q. At what time did you emigrate?

A. I did not emigrate, I left France before the revolution.

Q. Have you carried arms against the republic?

A. No.

Q. But you was in the expedition of Quiberon?

A. That is true; but I was not in a military capacity.

Q. Was you not a nobleman?

A. No.

Then the president said,—What were the reasons, citizen, which forced you to quit France?

A. I left France in 1789, to recover in England some funds in the name of the house of ——— whose property was in St. Domingo. I embarked at Nantes in the month of May. I engaged myself with a merchant called Wrenden. I staid with him a long time. This
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man who behaved to me like a father, becoming a bankrupt, was obliged to go to Scotland. I parted from him. I was unwilling to return to France under the bloody reign of Robespierre. Finding myself in London without resources, the quarter-master of the French regiments applied to me to keep his accounts: I engaged with him. When we set sail, I thought we were going to Jersey. I found myself at Quiberon, and I was preparing to return to England the very moment when the fort was taken. Citizen, if I had not lost my papers with my property, I could give you proofs of what I advance. But I rely on your justice, to grant me a reprieve in order that I may procure them.

Q. Citizen, was the merchant at whose house you were, of the opposition party?

A. I do not know his political opinions.

Then the president said to me with kindness "make yourself easy: We will do you justice." At these words, the galleries which had observed a profound silence applauded with the most lively expressions of joy. I went into the apartment where those were who remained to be examined. I desired them not to appear to know me. Monsieur

D'Entrechaux

D'Entrechaux passed for a servant. At noon the commission closed. Every one had been examined. At one o'clock, Sophia came with one of her friends to ask for me. She pronounced with a loud voice the name of Chammerix. This incident might have been very injurious to me. I went to the window and said to her, "The citizen whom you ask for, "is no longer here; go this night to the house "of arrest: The citizen ——— will give you "some account of him."—Sophia was so troubled that she did not understand what I said. Her friend understood me and took her away.

I passed from noon till four o'clock with those who had just been interrogated. One might say that the approach of death increased their serenity. A pupil of the navy M. de Payen, who only exceeded the term to which reprieves were granted, by six months, declared his age, tho' his appearance was extremely young. The president of the tribunal endeavoured in vain to save him.

At four o'clock in the evening, the detachment charged with the execution arrived. The secretary called those who were condemned to die. The name of M. de N. having been badly written in the register, he did not answer.

The

The secretary went on to the rest. He was going to retire, when M. de N. told him, "It is certainly my name that you have called;" and he followed his comrades.

When the call was over, a corporal tied the hands of the persons condemned behind their backs. To add to the horror of the spectacle, they were preceded by men who were to dig their graves. Twenty-eight were going to suffer. Twelve had obtained a respite. Mons. D'Entrechaux and I were of this number. But when our unfortunate companions turned towards us for the last time, saying, "*Do not forget us, we are happy to see you have escaped,*" we not only did not feel the happy contrast of our situation, but new sentiments arose in our minds. We were very near betraying ourselves, by demanding to follow them. Our hearts struggling with secret remorse, and torn with grief, made us experience torments more cruel than that death we had escaped. Half an hour after, we heard the fatal discharge;† and almost at the same

E instant,

† All those who had been witnesses of these horrible executions, thought that in the general courage and coolness of the victims, it was impossible to distinguish any one. However the firmness of M. de Kergariou-Loemaria, a distinguished officer, astonished

instant, we saw passing by us, the bleeding remains of our friends. I fell down senseless. I endeavoured in vain to take some repose; frightful phantoms pursued me. At length after much agitation, I heard a voice which calmed my senses; it was that of Sophia, whom I had not till then perceived, and who was come into the hotel.

All those who had obtained their respite of the different commissions, were taken the next day, the 4th, to the tower of Vannes. We were one hundred and eight.

CHAPTER. VI

My residence in the Tower of Vannes, and my escape.

MY two friends came to see me in the tower. I will not endeavour to describe their joy. They rejoiced much more than myself at my good fortune. They were to go the next day; they were willing to give me the whole day. How delicious were those moments:

Our

astonished even his companions. His brother, Major of the regiment of Drenay, had already perished in the affair of the 16th. His nephew M. de Lage de Volude, a promising young man, was missed twice.—The wounded unable to walk, were shot on their mattresses! This excess of barbarity is inconceivable.

Our separation how afflicting! Tender and generous friends! you have left in my heart a lasting impression. Impelled by different destinies, we have not served under the same banners, but you acted in the persuasion that you were serving your country. Fatal illusion! which glory seemed willing to prolong, and which has too much served your crafty tyrants! But you have remained innocent in the midst of so many crimes; if I have fought against the Revolution, you have ameliorated its misfortunes.

On the sixth, a republican soldier to whom M. D'Entrechaux had delivered his purse at the taking of the fort, having heard that he was not executed, came to Vannes to return it. All was tranquil till the sixteenth.

The sixteenth, the chiefs of the Chouans proposed that if the prisoners would revolt, they would advance in the night to second them. There were in the town 2000 prisoners and only 600 soldiers to guard them. The plot was discovered by two soldiers of the regiment of Hervilly. Canons were placed before the prisons. Seven chiefs of the Chouans were immediately shot.

The day following, General le Moine came

to the tower, and warned us that upon the least movement, he would exterminate us with grape-shot. The language of this ferocious man exasperated the soldiers.

On the 18th, the representative Blad, arrived at Vannes; he permitted the inhabitants to visit us as usual, from eight till twelve, and from two till eight. He took great pains to comfort all those who had relations among us. He did not seem to have any apprehension for our fate, and I believe he was in earnest. We were already indebted to him for our reprieve; besides he had endeavoured to improve our situation.

General le Moine had placed the privates who were prisoners, in a camp which was on a public walk, and opposite to us. We might be known by those of our regiments. From that time our minds were employed on the means of escaping. It was necessary to find in the town, a house where we should be received. The mistress of that to which we were recommended, waited for us during eight days, and slept on a mattress behind her door.

We had under our windows, and very near us, two sentinels. On a day of public promenade, one of these soldiers said to his comrades,

rades, "I lay that I am able to distinguish patriots from royalists;" and seeing a woman pass by with a majestic mien; "pray, citizen, are you not a patriot?"—"Yes, answered she, as good a one as Charette," and the two foldiers fell a laughing.

Sophia had been ill since the 16th. She came to see me on the 20th. This tender friend had the most gloomy presages. She incessantly represented to me that the dangers I should run in endeavouring to escape, were far less than those to which we were exposed in our present situation.

The 27th, nothing had yet transpired.—The 28th, they came to demand twelve persons to be examined. It was not in my power to furnish proofs of what I had advanced. Soon after I heard that all, even to the servants were to be shot.

Our only concern then was, to concert means to escape a death which appeared certain.—There was at the top of the tower, directly under the roof, a little place which I had perceived some days before. We went to it, carrying our mattresses. We requested our friends to say that we had been interrogated, and to make public an account of our death.

They

They were taking away the prisoners until noon. At four we heard the discharge. At seven the remainder was called.—I heard the officer asking if there was nobody else? They answered no.

Imagine to yourself our situation ; in a space of six feet square, obliged to stand concealed behind our mattresses, almost afraid to breathe, and fearing every moment to be discovered. Thus we passed two days, suffering every instant all the horrors of death. I ought not to forget the most striking circumstance. After the execution of the prisoners, the inhabitants came into the tower, to reclaim the effects which they had brought thither. The soldiers would not give them up. “How, said the inhabitants, after having massacred these ill-fated men, do you wish to plunder us?” A woman among them, more enraged than the rest, discovered the place where we were, seized one of the mattresses, and perceiving us, “No, said she, going immediately away, I was mistaken ; there is nothing of mine here.”

At nine in the evening, having disguised ourselves, we left the tower.* They had
badly

* From all the accounts I have received, I presume that about fifteen or twenty persons may have escaped from the prison.

badly described the house to which we were to go ; we entered another. We began to fear we were discovered ; “ Fear nothing,” said the master, I see that you are unfortunate emigrants. My house is yours, stay here.” Our tears indicated our gratitude. He conducted us to the house we were looking for, where we remained concealed from the 13th of August, to the 17th of September.

We have passed over in silence many circumstances relative to our escape. We were fearful of betraying our benefactors to the rage of our assassins.

CHAPTER VII.

My arrival on board the English Squadron.

ON the seventeenth, we proposed to avail ourselves of an opportunity to reach the English squadron. M. D’Entrechaux and I went to a house out of the town. The following day, two women came to conduct us ; we dressed like country labourers.

At nine we set out ; after walking a league, we saw four men armed with clubs spring from a hedge, who said laughing, “ Faith had
you

"you been Blues, (so they call the republican
 "soldiers) you were undone; but we know
 "you." We continued our route; and after
 travelling four hours, we arrived at the first
 village. One of the women conducted us to
 a house; she spoke in the dialect of Low Brit-
 tany to our hosts, and they brought us din-
 ner. When we parted, these good people
 heaped blessings upon us, and it was impos-
 sible to make them accept of any thing. We
 had a river to cross which lay between us and
 the village where we were to sleep. When we
 were going to cross it, some Chouans cried to
 us—*The Blues are coming.* We waited some
 time, and we saw a detachment of twelve sol-
 diers pass who were going out of the village.
 We then entered. The man to whom we
 were recommended, said, "You shall set out
 "to-morrow at ten o'clock for the place of
 "embarkation. I will send two men to con-
 "duct you; the one shall go before and let
 "you know when the patrol will pass." We
 presently heard a noise. It was a new detach-
 ment which came into the house next to us.
 We concealed ourselves in a barn, and the next
 morning very early we departed with our two
 conductors; we went over fields and thorn
 hedges

hedges. After travelling two hours we arrived at a house where we were expected. We stayed there till the night of the 20th, when a boat took us, and at eight in the morning we were on board the English Squadron.— Sir John Warren shewed the most lively interest in our favor. Some time after, Captain Bertie came on board the commodore. I had sailed in the Thunderer; he wished me to return to that ship. I there found again the same obliging behaviour and the attentive civilities which the officers of the English Squadron have lavished on our corps.

I had received a letter from Sophia; she finished with these words; *Fly from this unhappy land.*

This tender friend had sent me the little money she had left. Sophia! you have done much more than snatched me from death. You have enlivened days which grief would have harrowed up. I carry with me into exile your sweet and consoling remembrance. Should I never see more that country so dear to me, Sophia, you possess my heart. I can dedicate to you only my life.



F

GENERAL

I have been thinking of you very much lately, and
 wondering how you are getting on. I hope you are
 well and happy. I have been very busy lately, but
 I have managed to find some time to write to you.
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GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THE origin of the Chouans is well known. They were formed from the wreck of La Vendee after the battle of Mans. They were dispersed in eleven departments comprising Brittany, Maine, Anjou, and a part of Normandy. Those of Vitre were the best disciplined. There was in Grand Champ a body of three thousand men, which might be looked upon as the center of the general rendezvous. A body of equal force was on the side of Sarzeau. They were partly composed of sea-faring men. The Chouans whose number was about eighty thousand, were not like the army of La Vendee, regularly organized. Dispersed over a vast extent of country, they did not obey any particular chief; however they acknowledged different commanders and one council, at the head of which at that time was Mons. de Puifaye, who regulated their movements and concentrated them together.

The Chouans carried on a cruel war against the republican soldiers. Concealed during the day, they reassembled in the night, procured

intelligence in the villages, and surprised whole detachments of them. I saw thirty dragoons go out of Vannes, whereof only seven returned at night; they brought with them only one wounded prisoner; this man was very tall and had a white cockade in his hat.

Many officers have assured me that since the Chouans had again taken up arms, twelve thousand republican soldiers had perished. This war which consisted of murderous and obscure combats, continually renewed, was singularly repugnant to the army.

Going from Vannes to the place where I was to embark, I passed the night at the house of an old man. "Here (said he) are 150 cart-ridges; my two sons are with the Chouans, but it is time to finish this work; we must not only send our children, the fathers also must march." I met on the road a great number of Chouans who had been informed that I was to pass. I discoursed a good deal with them. I discovered in all of them a profound hatred against the Blues and against the republican government. They enquired after their ancient landlords, to whom they had an extraordinary attachment. They wished for them, they called upon their names. "If they

were

"were with us, said they, things would go on quite otherwise; but we have nobody to command us." I must in truth declare that M. de Puisaye appeared to have their confidence.

The Quiberon expedition had given rise to an opinion respecting the Chouans, which I believe absolutely false. It would have been better to have employed them in the kind of warfare to which they had been accustomed, or else to have organized and disciplined them. Neither the one nor the other has been done.

In resuming these observations, it appears very certain that the Chouans without the splendor or the glory of La Vendee, were perhaps more dangerous to the Republic, because they occupied a larger and more important track of country. Their sentiments of religion and royalty were as fervid as in the people of La Vendee, but they were in want of a Roche Jaquelin, a Charette, &c.

The main army of General Hoche did not exceed seven or eight thousand. I carefully noticed the prevailing spirit among them.—The war being prolonged, the most intelligent people foresaw what has happened, that the army would become every day more estranged from

from political questions ; and that ideas, purely military, would prevail. Thus we see no more of those clubs and those orators who caused despair in the mind of Dumourier. St. Just established in 1793 in the army of Alsace a discipline, which the commissioners of the convention at length carried into all the republican armies. The code of this triumvirate would have astonished Frederic. The soldiers obeyed these terrible laws ; a prodigy which cannot be explained but by combining the ideas of country and liberty which gave strength to the command, and of the ideas of equality which levels the difference of ranks.

The presence of the commissioners of the convention in the armies has further contributed to maintain discipline : It has restricted the generals to the simple execution of the plans marked out by the committee of war. Every source of influence was in their hands. The result of it was, that these generals, without importance, without power, leaving one army for another, communicated to no one any particular system of thinking, and no impression remained but a general national sentiment, which has strongly attached the soldi-

ers to the defence of the country. Thus has the French convention avoided those dangers which proved fatal to the Roman senate.

We are not then to rely on the influence of the army on the form of government; subdued by the ruling power, it has but one object, and that is peace. Some glowing and ambitious minds will perhaps regret the rapid and brilliant strokes of war; but all the officers pant after the peaceable enjoyment of their promotions; all the soldiers of the requisition are eager to return to their fire-sides. These eight hundred thousand men which being embodied in the interior, threatened so much alarm to the actual government, will be easily reduced to the ordinary peace-establishment.

It is on the public mind that we ought to repose our hopes; and the change which is brought about in France in this respect is immense. The round of popular projects is exhausted. Europe has been completely duped by a new system of moderation: This was attributed to the convention. It has not been observed that the party which overthrew Robespierre, sought only to escape from the proscription that threatened it, and seize on the power; it was soon obliged to give way to the
general

general motion ; but since, it has been constantly employed in restraining the influence of the general will. Public opinion has always surpassed the convention in every measure of justice and humanity. Tired at length with this struggling, it has publicly abjured the system of moderation ; and the last days of his wretched existence have been marked by decrees worthy of Robespierre.—His tyranny is about to be multiplied under new forms. By the report of cannon the constitution was proclaimed ; by the blood of four thousand citizens it has been sealed.

Oh my country ! I cannot foresee thy great destinies. But tyranny cannot reign long where I have seen so many virtues. Yes, mayest thou become the happy abode of liberty and of glory ! May our unhappy divisions be forgotten ! Six years of misfortunes ought to have appeased all hatred. Frenchmen, let the same desire, the same sentiment reunite you ! Prepare by your wisdom and courage, that day which your tyrants dread—a day of consolation, in which all errors will be forgotten, all faults pardoned, and guilt abandoned to remorse !

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